

The Top 10 Steps to Making Major Life Changes

1. Identify the payoffs and price of staying where you are.

There are certainly good reasons you have for not already having made a transition. Do some soul searching with trusted allies or through journaling to uncover what payoffs you're receiving for not making the change. At the same time, identify the price you are paying for maintaining the status quo. When your conscious mind gets that the price is greater than the payoff, you'll be much clearer whether it's in your best interest to keep things the same or to make a change.

2. Begin developing a reserve of everything.

A difficult transition can be made much easier when you have reserves in many areas of your life. Develop a plan to put away enough money to support yourself for the next year or two. Seek out trusted friends and associates for your personal support team who are excited and committed to supporting you. Simplify your life in terms of time and clutter to free up the space for something more in alignment with what you want. Look at other life areas such as relationships, recreation, family, etc. that you can beef up to help you through the transition. Keep in mind that it's better to be over prepared and succeed than to fail because you were under prepared.

3. Develop a vision of what's possible to pull you through the transition.

Not knowing what might happen if you change careers or leave a long-standing relationship can be very frightening. Fear of the unknown can keep you stuck. It can also keep you from honestly discovering and exploring the options that are always there. Once discovered, you can use these options to develop a vision of what your life will look like after your transition. Make up your vision if it isn't coming to you naturally, but make it good. Your vision will form the matrix on which you will create your new life and give you the inspiration and courage you need to move on.

4. Uncover your self-judgments.

Guilt is rampant in our culture. So is the vendetta against selfishness. Suffering is supported and nurtured by friends, family, religions, etc. So it's not surprising that many of us, deep down, don't feel we deserve to have what we want. It's critical to dig down and uncover any judgments you may be holding against yourself, knowing that they are usually subconscious and may require some work. For example, you may feel that you're not good enough or deserving of what you want. Or you may feel that the transition you're about to make will hurt someone in your life and that you'll be responsible for their pain. Or you may feel that you're not smart enough, resourceful enough, bold enough, or just plain "enough" to make this change. Acknowledge these judgments then forgive yourself for holding these false perceptions about who you really are. Because the truth is, they are only ideas and you will create yourself each moment based on the new idea you can hold about who you are.

5. Give up playing the victim.

Are you complaining about being in the situation you're in? Are you blaming others for this scenario? Or maybe you've accepted full responsibility for this situation and just beat yourself up for not making the change. If any of the above are true, you are playing the victim. It's time to come to grips with the fact that you have been forfeiting your power to make the change you say you want. Even if you're blaming yourself for not being happy

or for having the courage to make the change, then part of you is beating up another part of yourself, hence there's a victim in there somewhere. To the degree you play the role of victim, you are losing power. So wake up and own your full power to create the life you desire, no matter what.

6. Give up analysis that breeds paralysis.

We are so conditioned to figure things out before we leap, that sometimes we become paralyzed to take the actions our bodies are directed to take from the beginning. This is particularly true if you are an engineer, scientist, or other type of technical person who experiences the world more through analysis more than feeling. I was an engineer once and from my own experience know this to be true. The mind is meant to be used to create and to keep us safe. If it's stuck in a pattern rehashing the same ideas over and over, trying to figure out what will happen if, then you're probably stuck in a mind-loop. It's time to quit thinking and start doing. Ask your body what action to take, and then just take it. Often the information you're seeking will only be made available after the action is taken. Wisdom often comes in the motion, not the analysis.

7. Risk failure.

Has the fear of failing got you stuck? If so, define what failure would look like for you. Imagine the worst possible thing that might happen. Can you live with it if it does happen? Can you make course corrections before it happens or after it happens? The answer is almost always "yes." I suggest removing the word "failure" from your vocabulary. Instead, realize that each of your actions will simply yield a result. This result will be one you want or one you don't want. Simply take the result as feedback from the universe on your action and take the next appropriate action. Viewed from this perspective, mistakes are merely indications that a course correction is needed and not to be taken personally. Pilots are checking their compass all the time and making course corrections based on this feedback. They'd never get anywhere if they took every off-course reading as a personal failure. Give up the concept of failure and take flight!

8. Access your inner warrior.

Within each of us, men and women alike, there is an aspect that is built for bold, decisive action. This part of us is instinctual. It looks out, not only for our survival, but also for our soul's mission. It is not concerned about sacrificing Self for another, yet, in certain circumstances will give its very life for another if that is in alignment with its mission. You get messages from this part of yourself all of the time. These messages may come in the form of feelings in your body in response to certain actions, environments, or experiences. They may come in the form of "gut" feelings in certain situations. Or they may be just a sense of direct "knowing" that has no rational foundation. If you are contemplating a difficult transition, and have "contemplated" yourself into a corner, it may be time to let your inner warrior take over for a while. Just experience "knowing" what you need to do, then commit to doing it without thinking anymore about it until it's done.

9. Don't go to your deathbed wondering what would have happened if...

It's easy for us to forget how short our lives really are. Many of us live as if we'll never die. We waste away our hours and days working jobs we hate, living just for the weekends, or "putting in time" until retirement, while living like zombies the other 70% of our lives. We may live in a relationship that drains and devalues us thinking it might magically get better somehow, someday. We deny our feelings or make excuses for frittering away our lives. Enough I say! I challenge you to project yourself forward to your death. It's real and it's coming for you! No questions about it. See yourself on your deathbed and ask yourself if the life you're living now is all you dreamt it to be. Write your own obituary

today. How close are you to living your passion? Let this vision be a motivator to get off your butt and follow your dreams!

10. Get support to prepare and walk with you through the transition.

Big life transitions can be overwhelming to accomplish on your own. There is no shame in asking for help from your friends, relatives, or from a coach. In fact, enough of the right kind of support can make a seemingly difficult transition, relatively easy. I've had a lot of help in making a couple of big transitions in my life. Being a former lone-ranger, asking for and accepting help from others was difficult at first, but really nice once I got used to it. Now I wouldn't think of starting a major project or making a big change without relying heavily on my support system of close and loving friends, and my coach. Do whatever is necessary to make change easy on you. You're worth it.

About the Submitter:

This piece was originally submitted by Steve Davis, MS, MA, CCUG, Life Coach and Infopreneur, who can be reached at steve@livingmastery.com, or visited on the [web](#).

Copyright 2000, 2001, 2002 by Thomas J. Leonard. May be distributed if full attribution is given and copyright notice is included.